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NEBC MEETING NEWS

August Field Trip. On Saturday, August 9, Pam Weatherbee and David Hunt led eight Club members on a scramble up Cedar Mountain in Mount Washington, MA, an 1800 ft. peak on the Massachusetts–New York border. The south-facing slope is remarkably similar to the grassy balds on the traprock slope of Bare Mountain, visited on the June field trip, but with schist providing the substrate. The slopes have an open and diverse oak-hickory canopy and a grassy herbaceous layer dominated by *Carex pensylvanica* and *Deschampsia flexuosa,* with *Viburnum rafinesquianum* in the shrub layer. Some of the more exciting herbaceous species occurred on the rock outcrops, including *Paronychia canadensis, Asplenium platyneuron, Woodsia ilvensis, Galium pilosum, Carex virescens, Pycnanthemum incanum,* and *Viola palmata.* The low scrub oak and pitch-pine community at the summit yielded both *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* and *Potentilla tridentata,* as well as spectacular views into both states. A return trip in spring was recommended to see the many now-dormant spring ephemerals.

September 1997. The Club met at Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, VT. Arthur Gilman spoke on "The Flora of Caledonia County, Vermont," which he has spent the last five years investigating. Caledonia County has 1185 species and 457 genera (326 indigenous), 60% of the species diversity and 80% of the generic diversity found in the state. Twenty-nine species in the Caledonia County flora are state-listed. Weedy non-native species contribute about 30% of the flora, and many are expanding in their ranges. The flora is still a work in progress; Art added one new species (*Nardus stricta*) only last week.

Caledonia County occupies 619 square miles over 17 townships, including the piedmont and northeast highlands provinces of Vermont. Elevations range from 426 ft. along the Connecticut River to 3364 ft. on Signal Mountain. Tills over calcareous bedrock are the predominant substrate. These calcareous substrates are responsible for the range of interesting and unique habitats, including Peacham Bog, one of the largest Vermont peatlands and the second largest raised bog in the state. Limestone fens and outcrops support unique floras, including *Saxifraga virginiensis, Hepatica acutiloba, Viola canadensis, Parnassia glauca, Lobelia*

kalmii, Carex flava, and *Scirpus hudsonianus.* The calcareous substrates also result in a high diversity of orchids, including *Cypripedium arietinum, Calypso bulbosa* (Art says he has seen more herbarium specimens than living plants), *Cypripedium reginae, Listera convallarioides, Spiranthes,* and *Orchis spectabilis.* Aquatics are also unusually diverse. Barre Hellquist has said that this is one of the most interesting aquatic floras in New England, due to the many "hard" water ponds, "soft" water ponds, and the Connecticut River. Barre has collected 13 species of pondweeds in a single pond.

Many species reach either the northern or southern limits of their ranges here, including *Epigaea repens,* white spruce, and *Monarda fistulosa.* Several other southern elements reach their limits in the Connecticut River valley a few miles south of the Caledonia County limits, including *Carya cordiformis, Betula lenta, Carex baileyi, Diplazium pycnocarpon,* and *Asplenium platyneuron.* Many northern species occur in the county, including *Saxifraga oppositifolia, Primula mistassinica, Luzula parviflora, Astragalus robbinsii, Carex capillaris, Huperzia selago, Woodsia glabella, Dryopteris fragrans,* and *Solidago macrophylla.* The flora includes some interesting disjunctions. *Rhododendron maximum* occurs around several ponds in the Groton area, more than 100 miles from the nearest populations in southern New Hampshire.

September Field Trips. Arthur Gilman led two botanical explorations in southern Caledonia County on September 19 and 20, 1997. On Friday, 25 Club members and friends ambled along a natural gas pipeline right-of-way in East Burke, VT, in search of calciphiles growing in the calcareous groundwater seeps. Following moose tracks up along the pipeline, we found an exciting flora with large numbers of flowering *Spiranthes cernua.* Highlights included a large range of "fern allies" (*Equisetum variegatum, Lycopodium clavatum, Lycopodiella inundatum, Huperzia selago,* and *Selaginella apoda*), sedges (*Carex baileyi, C. gynandra,* and *C. flava, Scirpus hudsonianus* and *S. microcarpus, Eriophorum viridicarinatum,* and *Eleocharis tenuis*) and other species, including *Parnassia glauca* (still in bloom!). Surprisingly, most of these calciphiles were growing in and among dense mounds of *Sphagnum.* Southern New England Club members

were delighted to find *Gaultheria hispidula* and *Linnaea borealis* growing along the edges of the cleared right of way.

On Saturday, 27 Club members, friends, and families met Art at the Pine Grove Picnic Area at the Comerford Reservoir in East Barnet, VT, and explored the nearby lake shore, old field, powerline, swamp, and roadside habitats within the Connecticut River valley. Several plants we encountered, including *Stellaria aquatica* and *Asplenium trichomanes,* are at their only known station in Caledonia County. Other highlights included *Gentiana clausa, Isoetes riparia, Polystichum acrostichoides* f. *multifidum, Fraxinus nigra, Spiranthes ochroleuca* and *S. casei, Botrychium dissectum, Carex muhlenbergii,* and *Panicum xanthophysum,* as well as numerous red efts and unusual caterpillars. The *Botrychium* population was remarkable for its size, and extended over most of a large old field.

—LISA A. STANDLEY, Recording Secretary.